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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Veterinary
Services

Accepting Live Animal Shipments

Checklist for Airline Baggage and Passenger Agents*

- ☐ **Receiving restrictions** Don't accept animals more than 4 hours prior to flight time without advance arrangements; 6 hours with advance arrangements. Accept animals only if warehouse space is available with inside temperature between 8 and 29°C (45 and 85°F). Indoor temperature can be lower if a certificate from an accredited veterinarian states that animals (except guinea pigs) have been acclimated to temperatures below 45°F. NOTE: Acceptance of live animals is *not limited by outdoor temperature*.
- ☐ **Caution** Use regular handholds on cages so animals can't scratch or bite you. Move animals gently. Hand-carry cages between floors if conveyor belts are so steep cages might tip over.
- ☐ **Shipping cost** Be sure that shipper has paid for or guaranteed all shipping costs, including return of refused COD shipments.
- ☐ **Health certificate** Take a close look at the health certificate. Check that puppies and kittens are at least 8 weeks old and weaned 5 days. Most airlines require a valid health certificate from *all* shippers for each dog, cat, monkey and other nonhuman primate. Federal agencies, licensed dealers or exhibitors, registered research institutions, and others licensed or registered under the Animal Welfare Act *must* present a certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian within 10 days of shipment.

See reverse side

*See separate list for baggage and cargo handlers. For details, see Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 1.

- ☐ **Cage compliance certificate** Be aware that shippers regulated under the Animal Welfare Act are entitled to present the airline with a certificate stating that animals are caged properly. It relieves the airline of responsibility when a cage proves to be defective unless the cage is obviously substandard.
- ☐ **Proper cage** Accept clean cages whose manufacturers have USDA approval. Homemade cages are acceptable only if clean, sturdy, properly ventilated and equipped with required rims and handles. Regulations set the minimum number of ventilation openings. If in doubt, ask your supervisor.
- ☐ **Cage size** Make sure that each animal has enough space to turn about freely, and to stand, sit, and lie down naturally. Regulations set specific minimum cage dimensions for dogs, cats, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, and monkeys and other nonhuman primates.
- ☐ **Good repair** Check cages for broken wires or other protrusions that can injure animals.
- ☐ **Warning signs** Be sure the top and at least one side of all cages are marked "Live Animals" with arrows indicating which side is "up."
- ☐ **Accessibility** Verify that animals can be removed from their cages in an emergency without special tools.
- ☐ **Separation** See that animals caged together are compatible. Different species must be in different cages.
- ☐ **Animals per cage** Observe these limits: 1 adult dog or cat; 2 puppies or kittens if under 6 months old and under 20 pounds; 15 guinea pigs or rabbits; 50 hamsters; 10 monkeys or other nonhuman primates.
- ☐ **Bedding** Require clean bedding unless cage subfloors let wastes run through (cage bottoms must be leak-proof). Straw and shredded paper are acceptable; other materials must be absorbent, safe, and nontoxic. A pegboard subfloor is unacceptable.
- ☐ **Feeding and watering** See that instructions for feeding and watering are attached to each cage, regardless of flight length. For the protection of airline personnel, bowls should be tightly fastened and placed so they can be filled without opening the cage.